



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

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TRAVEL TIPS: HOW TO GEAR UP FOR A GREAT VACATION

Nashville, TN.-The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs encourages consumers to travel smart this summer by following a few common sense tips for a great vacation.

"There is nothing worse than a long awaited vacation turning into a disaster because of a travel scam. Many of these situations can be avoided by being an informed consumer," said Mary Clement, Director for the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs.

The Division of Consumer Affairs offers the following tips:

Buy your vacation package from a business you have confidence in. Ask family and friends to recommend a company with a good track record. Think twice if you can't get a person on the phone to answer your questions or if the ad doesn't give the company's street address. Contact the Division of Consumer Affairs to see if there is a history of complaints on file or view the Division's "Buyer Beware" list on the web.

Be on the alert for the telltale signs of a travel scam. Unsolicited faxes or emails for deeply discounted travel packages promise the world. If it sounds too good to be true, it often is.

Verify and clarify. Call to verify your reservations and arrangements. Get the details behind vague promises that you'll be staying at a "five-star" resort or sailing on a "luxury" cruise ship. When you have the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the airlines, car rental companies, and hotels you'll be using, confirm all arrangements for yourself.

Put it on paper. Get the details of your vacation in writing. Get a copy of the company's cancellation and refund policies.

Use a credit card to make your purchase. If you don't get what you paid for, you may be able to dispute the charges with your credit card company. However, never give your account number to any business until you've verified it is reputable.

Avoid a travel club flub. Ask questions before joining a travel club. Sometimes, a "free trial" membership can result in unauthorized charges on your credit card. Find out what you'll get for your money and how you can cancel.

Won a "free" vacation? Not so fast. Scam artists may tell you you've won a "free" vacation, but then claim to need your credit card number for "verification." If the promotion is legit, you never need to pay for a prize.

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Understand travel insurance before you buy. Make sure you understand the protections you are paying for and the terms and conditions that will apply to recover any benefits.

For more information about consumer related issues or to view the Divisions "Buyer Beware" list, please visit <http://www.state.tn.us/consumer/> or contact the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-342-8385.

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